

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES **TOOL**
Nutrition & Physical Activity **KIT**



INTRODUCTION

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The Mount Vernon and Moses Lake Healthy Communities Projects are examples of how two Washington cities mobilized their communities to address health problems associated with the lack of physical activity and poor nutrition.

This tool kit is a way to share what these communities learned and advice they offer others interested in mobilizing their community. The tool kit contains the lessons learned in Moses Lake and Mount Vernon as they worked through the planning process, useful tools to gather information from the community, sample evaluation tools, and selected planning resources. The result is an action plan to make policy and environmental changes that will make it easier for community members to be physically active and choose healthy foods.

Stories from these communities are rich with lessons and offer examples of the successes and challenges each community faced as they began to make their vision of a healthy community a reality.

The tool kit describes the planning period, a crucial first step to developing an action plan that reflects each community's needs and interests. Each community's action plan includes priority recommendations described in the *Washington State Nutrition & Physical Activity Plan: Policy & Environmental Approaches*

With funds from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention administered through Washington State Department of Health, the cities of Moses Lake and Mount Vernon agreed to serve as "pilot" communities. The vision was that if cities with effective, committed leaders were provided technical assistance and a limited amount of funds they could make environmental and policy changes that would increase the number of residents who are physical activity and choose healthy foods. The tool kit covers the planning period (12 months Moses Lake; 6 months for Mount Vernon) that culminated in an action plan specific to each community.

"Moses Lake has a pioneer sense of being self-sufficient. They depend on each other. It's a different level of commitment because people live and work in the same community. This project is something they call their own."

WA State Department of Health
project staff

"It worked in Moses Lake because we had the backing from community leaders. The movers and shakers in the city saw the value of this project."

Sally Goodwin, City of Moses
Lake

"Choose something early on where you can be successful. The community is watching you. It works if you build on these small successes."

Peter Browning, Skagit County
Public Health Department